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THE BAPTIST Record

Special Edition

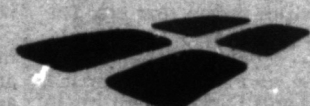
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MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

GuideStone: Stay on planned course



GuideStone FINANCIAL RESOURCES of the Southern Baptist Convention

DALLAS (BP and local reports) — American stock markets swung wildly last week in the wake of Standard & Poor's announcement that it had lowered the U.S. credit rating from AAA to AA+.

The news rattled markets and led to a steep sell-off of U.S. equities that recovered by the end of the week.

Daily drops of 500-600 points were recorded last week in one of the most volatile weeks in memory — and possibly in the history of American stock trading.

Even in the midst of volatile markets, properly allocated retirement investors are advised to maintain their investment strategy, according to officials at Dallas-based GuideStone Financial Resources, a diversified provider of retirement and other financial products to Southern Baptist and other evangelical churches, colleges, seminaries, hospitals, and related institutions.

GuideStone was previously known as the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Although it is always prudent to review one's investments periodically, making changes in volatile markets

can lead to emotional mistakes, according to GuideStone officials.

"Our retirement-plan participants should always keep the long-term view first and foremost," said O.S. Hawkins, GuideStone's president. "It's easy to allow disturbing headlines to cloud our judgment. In all times — but especially times like these — the important thing is for investors to remain rational, consider their financial goals and to avoid making decisions guided by emotion."

Whether the market is up or down, GuideStone officials point to three key areas that can help investors make decisions about how to handle their investments.

Focus on objectives, not emotions

GuideStone retirement plan participants can access the free GPS: Guided Planning Services tool both online or by telephone appointment. With GPS, participants can see whether they are properly allocated based on their risk tolerance and investing time horizon — generally, the time until they'll need to start drawing their retirement accounts down.

Tools like GPS can help an investor look at their investments more objectively and make any necessary changes to their account based on facts, not today's headlines.

Avoid impulsive decisions

Guard against making ad hoc changes in an investment portfolio. Making changes based on short-term market movements can lead to failure as it promotes "buying high and selling low."

The performance of a retirement investment account in moving forward will be determined based on results of the financial markets in the future, not the past. Selling today cannot avoid yesterday's losses in a down market.

Likewise, in an up market, investors cannot buy yesterday's performance by investing in the hottest fund.

Maintain realistic expectations

Financial markets move up and down over time in response to social, political, and economic events. Further, equity investments are by nature more volatile than some other asset classes such as cash and bonds. Equity investors who are properly allocated should be able to accept significant short-term fluctuations in the value of their portfolios.

"We never know what the future holds," Hawkins said. "What we can do is look at history and see that investors who maintained a consistent investment discipline and did not make rash decisions almost always come out better off than those who changed direction every time the economic winds moved."

GuideStone has prepared a panel discussion on retirement during this uncertain economy. Featuring distinguished experts in investments, retirement planning and economics, it can be accessed at www.GuideStone.org/RetirementInTodayEconomy.

For more information on the potential impact of the credit rating downgrade, go to the GuideStone Capital Management website at www.GuideStoneCapital.org/Commentary.aspx.

Guidestone gets top rankings

DALLAS (BP) — GuideStone Funds was ranked number two among its 222 peers for the period from April 1 through June 30 by F360 Fund Family Fiduciary Rankings.

Additionally, the MyDestination 2035 and 2045 funds of GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention were ranked number one in their respective categories for the one-year period ending June 30, according to industry-ranking firm Lipper.

The Extended-Duration Bond Fund (GS2 class) finished with number one rankings in the three- and five-year periods ending June 30.

As of June 30, the MyDestination 2035 Fund was ranked number one of 107 funds in the one-year period and 26 of 76 funds in the three-year period in Lipper's Mixed-Asset Target 2035 category, while the MyDestination 2045 Fund was ranked first among 106 funds in the one-year period and 27 among 75 funds in the three-year period in the Mixed-Asset Target 2045 category.

The Extended-Duration Bond Fund (GS2 Class) was ranked 13th among 138 funds in the one-year period, first among 121 funds in the three-year period and first among 115 funds in the five-year period in Lipper's Corporate Debt Funds A Rated category.

In addition to Lipper's number one rankings, 10 out of 13 funds in the GS2 class and 14 out of 21 funds in the GS4 class exceeded their Lipper medians. The share classes are defined in each prospectus and relate to eligibility of participants and plan size.

SPECIAL EDITION



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Our Mississippi Baptist garden

In Mississippi Baptist life, as in Christianity as a whole, we are the benefactors of the sacrificial actions and efforts of the spiritual giants who preceded us. They planted this remarkable Baptist garden in which we live, then others watered it, and we live in the blessings of their faithfulness every day.

One of those spiritual giants, among the many Mississippi Baptists have produced, is Margaret McKee Lackey. She was born in 1858 in Copiah County, the fifth of nine children born to James and Elizabeth Lackey. She grew up doing what most girls in Mississippi did in that era. She played games with her friends, went to school, did her chores at home, and attended church.

Margaret Lackey went on to attend Hillman College in Clinton, which we now know as Mississippi College, one of our three Baptist-affiliated institutions of higher learning in the state. She studied to be a teacher and indeed taught for many years in Mississippi schools.

Raised in the Baptist tradition of the day, Lackey — who never married — had a deep love for missions whose goal it was (and is) to spread the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to people who had never heard of the Savior. She used her teaching skills to help the children in her church learn to share her love of missions.

She also utilized her talent as a gifted poet and writer to help Christians understand the importance of missions. She was the author of several studies on missions.

In 1912, Margaret Lackey became the first paid leader of the Mississippi Women's Missionary Union (WMU). Her passion for missions was obvious to all who met her. She once wrote, "Sisters, we have done passing well this year, but oh, the untouched multitudes of women and children in Mississippi whose souls are crying silently yet know not for what they are crying."

After a storied career, Margaret Lackey retired in 1930 from her position as corresponding secretary of Mississippi WMU. Many more Mississippi Baptist women, inspired by her model life, have been raised up by the Lord for Kingdom service since then.

In 1903, Margaret Lackey was among those who led Mississippi WMU to begin a special annual observance to emphasize the importance of state missions. That special observance eventually turned into the Season of Prayer for State Missions.

In 1935, the offering taken during the Season of Prayer for State Missions was

named in honor of the woman who today remains one of Mississippi Baptists' most outstanding leaders: the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.

Margaret McKee Lackey died in 1948 just a few days short of her 90th birthday, having lived during a most memorable time in Mississippi and American history. As a child, she witnessed the Civil War and the privations of Reconstruction. As an adult, she lived through World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. No doubt, her life experiences convinced her of the importance of bringing everyone she could to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The first state missions offering in 1903 received a total of \$294.38. The 2011 goal for the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering is \$2,000,000. Miss Lackey would be pleased to know that the work in which she so earnestly believed has been carried on in her name for these many years.

Today the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering encompasses a multitude of important state programs, such as Christian camping, church planting, disaster relief, literacy, and volunteer missionary assistance. Gifts to the offering make possible many of the Mississippi Baptist programs that exist today.

Now it's our turn to tend to the garden. May we be found faithful in this and all endeavors we undertake in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in remembrance of spiritual giants like Margaret Lackey.



Margaret Lackey

GUEST OPINION:

Margaret Lackey: Crime Fighter

By David Michel
Assoc. Executive Director
Miss. Baptist Conv. Board



for the number of offenders who will need incarceration over the next 15-20 years. I was shocked by the discovery and saddened as well, but at the same time I gained new appreciation for all those who minister with children whether in church or school.

The next time you are asked to volunteer in your church's preschool or children's ministry, maybe you should think of it as a crime-prevention measure.

I discovered deeper appreciation for the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions' attention to children's ministry also. Eight hundred thousand dollars are allocated for camp ministry in the state mission offering. The largest single focus at our Mississippi Baptist campgrounds (Central Hills Retreat near West and Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton) is children, starting with third graders. The emphases for Mississippi's children are salvation and spiritual direction. Last year almost 400

young people made professions of faith in Christ. Surely that's better than choosing a path to jail!

However, we should think beyond just an initial decision to follow Christ. Many summer campers trace their eventual call to missions or church ministry to early childhood retreat/camp experiences. The Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions funds church planters and helped send almost 3,000 missionary volunteers last year as well. Had it not been for these early missionary investments in their lives, how many would have chosen Christian service over other life paths? If correctional officials plan future prisons based on children's test scores, then shouldn't Christian leaders plan future missionary capacity on how well we provide for the missions education and experiences of our children? Our generous support of the state mission offering helps ensure a growing corps of future spiritual leaders.

Our gratitude needs to include key leaders like Jim Ray, manager at Central Hills, and Erica Hagar, who manages program and guest services at Garaywa. They enlist and train summer camp staff every year. These young staffers give their hearts to kids 24/7, week in and week out, to help meet developmental issues and give spiritual direction. Their service to the Lord on behalf of Mississippi Baptists is eternally valuable. The final results are as yet undiscovered, but we pray that God's Kingdom prospers through their efforts.

The Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions includes many other ministries that seek to transform people's lives. You can find detailed information on the website, www.mbcb.org/statemissions. The monetary goal for the offering this year is \$2,000,000. The effort that your church expends on promotion and the gifts of your members are long-term investments in the future leadership of God's Kingdom. As Mississippi Baptists we are in position to bring Christ's redemptive power into reality through compassionate ministry in every community in our state.

Michel is the associate executive director for the Mission Strategy Division of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Definition of parental roles splits officials'

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — In remarkably different court filings that highlight America's cultural divide on marriage's definition, the U.S. House of Representatives and the Obama Justice Department have come to opposite conclusions as to whether children need a mother and a father in the home.

At issue is the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the 1996 federal law which defines marriage as between a man and a woman and gives states the option of not recognizing another state's same sex marriages.

In its legal briefs arguing that the law should be upheld, the legal team hired by the House says DOMA is naturally tied to procreation and that children benefit from having both a mother and father in the home.

The Justice Department has discounted the procreation argument and argued that the gender of parents does not matter.

The view that prevails at the U.S. Supreme Court, which has yet to take up the issue, could determine the future of same sex marriage in America.

Homosexual rights groups view the law as a major obstacle to redefining marriage nationwide and are hoping the federal courts or Congress overturn it.

The Justice Department is tasked with defending the nation's laws, but U.S. President Barack Obama, a Democrat, earlier this year ordered the department to stop defending DOMA, forcing the Republican-led House to step in. In at least one legal case, the Justice Department is actually opposing DOMA.

The House team is led by Paul Clement, U.S. solicitor general under U.S. President George W. Bush. Clement's team quotes research stating that "the optimal situation for the child is to have

both an involved mother and an involved father."

"[T]he experience of a child raised by a man and a woman may differ from that of a child raised by same-sex caregivers," reads the House brief defending DOMA in a U.S. District Court case in New York. The brief asks the court to dismiss the DOMA suit.

"The federal courts that have upheld DOMA all have recognized that encouraging child-rearing by a married mother and father is a legitimate governmental interest, and that DOMA furthers that interest... Congress rationally could conclude that each child will benefit from having a role model of his or her own sex as a parent, and from being exposed within the family to how that parent relates to an adult of the opposite sex."

The brief then affirmingly quotes a 2004 remark by former U.S. Sen. Jim Talent: "One thing that two people of the same sex cannot give children is a mom and a dad."

The House attorneys further say that while same sex couples "may prove capable parents in many other regards, children raised by them inevitably will miss out on one or both of these benefits" — either having a mother or a father. It further quotes a U.S. representative from 2004 as saying in a mother-father household, each makes a "unique contribution" to a child's well-being.

The House's legal arguments, contrasted with the Justice Department's filings opposing DOMA, provide a dramatic moment in the legal battle over marriage's definition.

The Justice Department filed a brief on July 1 in a separate case arguing that the gender of parents does not matter. "There is no

sound basis for concluding that same-sex couples who have committed to marriages recognized by state law are anything other than fully capable of responsible parenting and child-rearing," according to the brief.

It further stated that gays have suffered a history of discrimination and that DOMA is driven by prejudice.

Conservative groups are applauding the briefs from Clement and his team. "They are doing an outstanding job," Holly Carmichael, an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund which supports DOMA, told Baptist Press. "They are drawing from the same main argument that the Department of Justice used to make — responsible procreation, having a mom and a dad, is the best model for children. Those are really the reasons the House enacted DOMA."

Similar to the House, the Justice Department under U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush defended DOMA by using legal arguments tied to procreation and the need for mother-father homes, but the Obama Justice Department — during the first two years of his administration when it was defending the law — refused to use that line of reasoning, saying it did not "believe that DOMA is rationally related to any legitimate government interests in procreation and child-rearing."

Supporters of DOMA were highly critical of the Justice Department's jettisoning of what they said were the most logical and best legal arguments. The House in 1996 had explicitly mentioned procreation and childrearing as part of its reason for passing the law. State courts that have refused to legalize same sex marriage have made similar arguments.

"When you separate this whole question of procreation and parenting from the institution of marriage, you've literally redefined marriage, because that is the primary purpose of marriage," Carmichael said, "and when we make marriage about just what individuals want and completely separate it from children, that has some stunning sociological and philosophical differences."

The House brief also differed from the Justice Department in another significant matter: whether DOMA should be reviewed under a legal term called "heightened scrutiny" or under another term, "rational basis." The answer could determine DOMA's future.

Under heightened scrutiny, the category promoted by the Justice Department, courts would view DOMA critically and would place sexual orientation alongside the category of race. Under rational basis, the category promoted by the House attorneys, the courts would give DOMA the benefit of the doubt and lawyers defending DOMA would only have to provide a rational reason behind the law.

At least 10 federal courts have held that laws pertaining to sexual orientation should be viewed under rational basis. No federal appeals court has ruled that sexual orientation is subject to heightened scrutiny.

For heightened scrutiny to apply to homosexuals, a four-part threshold would have to be met. It would have to be proven that:

- homosexuals have suffered a history of discrimination.
- homosexuals have exhibited immutable characteristics.
- homosexuals are a minority or politically powerless.
- the Defense of Marriage Act has no legitimate policy objective.

The Justice Department contends that gays meet all four standards.

"Homosexuality has not been proven to be immutable, and actually there's a lot of evidence indicating that people change in their sexual preferences," Carmichael said.

"It's also hard to say with a straight face that gays and lesbians don't have political power. That's a tough argument for [the Justice Department] to make, but they're very eager to get that higher level of scrutiny, because then they can get past these responsible procreation [arguments] and obvious physical differences between men and women."

Looking back

10 years ago

Louis Smith, former director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board church-minister relations and annuity department for 14 years, is named as the new director of the New Orleans Seminary extension center in Clinton.

20 years ago

Utah Missions, Inc., a ministry directed at Mormonism and recently incorporated into the work of the Home Mission Board, calls for the Southern Baptist Convention to rescind a decision approved in Atlanta in June to go to Salt Lake City for the 1998 SBC annual meeting.

30 years ago

Some churches in Alabama withdraw financial support from Southern Seminary because of the visit to the campus by Martin Luther King, Jr. A resolution from the seminary's trustees and president result in the easing of some tensions.

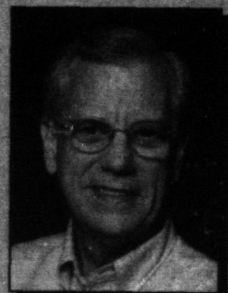
Rankin accepts post

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP) — Mississippi native Jerry Rankin, retired president of Southern Baptists' International Mission Board (IMB), has agreed to direct the Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies at Columbia International University (CIU) in Columbia, S.C.

Rankin succeeds current director Warren Larson, who will retire in 2012 but continue to serve in a teaching and writing role, according to a new release from the university. Rankin retired July 31, 2010, after 17 years as IMB president and 23 years of missionary service in Asia, initially in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world.

Rankin brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the area of Muslim studies, said Mike Barnett, associate dean of CIU's College of Intercultural Studies. "Dr. Rankin's decades of service with the IMB are invaluable as we look to the future at the Zwemer Center and consider new venues for Muslim studies both inside CIU's College of Intercultural Studies and assisting the church outside the university," Barnett said.

The Zwemer Center offers a curriculum on Muslim Studies, including a master's degree, and sponsors research, seminars, dialogues, and training conferences.



Rankin



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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IYWDI YD JXU IKD, QDT
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JXU IJQHI; QDT KFED
JXU UQHJX TYIJHUI EV
DQJYEDI, MYJX FUHF-
BUNYJO; JXU IUQ QDT
JXU MQLUI HEQHYDW.

BKAU JMUDJO-EDU:
JMUDJO-VYLU

Clue: B = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Acts Nine: Five

LOL

In the world of texting, LOL is generally accepted to mean, "Laugh Out Loud." While I am anything but a texting expert, I do like it when life is so enriched and blessed that we can laugh out loud. I know that the Scripture is always right. I know when it says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Prov. 17:22), it is right on target. May 1, which happened to fall on a Sunday this year, was World Laughter Day. I do not know who comes up with these designations or how they get their special day put on the calendar, but this one is good. Oh that everyone could observe it and even more significant, wouldn't it be great if everyone had reason to chuckle about something?

Laughter is an interesting thing and it is fascinating to see people who laugh and people who do not laugh at certain things. All of us have our own sense of what is funny or laughable. What turns my tickle box over may not be remotely humorous to you. One of the things that makes laughter so interesting to watch and to study is that just hearing someone laugh does not mean that something was funny, or when somebody does not laugh it does not mean that it wasn't humorous. Often the laughing mechanism of people who are emotionally scarred or mentally unbalanced is so distorted that they may laugh loudly and hilariously about something that should not be laughed at, and on the other hand cannot laugh even when something is a bombshell of humor to the majority of the people. Overall it is important that we have a buoyant spirit and a good healthy laugh. From time to time, it is medicine for the soul.

Think about this with me as we examine laughter. It can



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

be inappropriate. Sometimes when a speaker makes some funny remark or does something that is humorous there may be someone you notice in the crowd who does not respond at all. In fact, if anything it seems to bring pain or disgust rather than lightheartedness. The problem is that neither you nor I know what may be going on in the person's life. They may be in the meeting but totally disconnected because they have just been told of some health issue and are crushed about facing the future. Maybe some relationship has gone sour or at least sideways, or maybe they think that they know something about the speaker that no one else knows.

Paul tells us in Romans 12:15 that we are "to rejoice with those who rejoice," but listen to this: He tells us that we are "to weep with those who weep." Sometimes we are trying to make weepers laugh, and there are times when we may be trying to insist that those who are rejoicing need to weep with us. As you examine laughter, sometimes and in fact I think many times, it is inspirational. Even people you may not know, you can hear laughter coming from them, and maybe a smile comes across your face and a stirring within your heart as you wonder what caused them to start rejoicing. Maybe it is a child laughing almost uncontrollably and fiendishly and you wonder what that child is getting into. It will brighten your spirits and bless your heart. I am convinced that if

you examine laughter, more often than not the person with a bright spirit, a ready smile, and a happy outlook on life that laughs, giggles, and lives with a chuckle is the person that time and time again is lifting spirits. There are people who are so consistently negative and so rotten in attitude that just the mention of their name around anyone who knows them will literally make them clench their teeth as it sucks the healthy oxygen right out of the room. It is sad, but true.

Let me say just a word about the experience of laughter. I do not want to beat this to death, but I will promise you that folks who walk near Jesus and recognize who He is and what He has done to meet the essential needs in their lives and provide for them a new outpouring of sunshine each day are the kind of folks that brighten up the entire world. In John 15:11, Jesus said, "I want to give you my joy. I want it to be full and overflowing in your life." Whoa! That's good stuff. He wants us to experience the happiness of life. You do not have to live life with a growl, a snarl, and with bitterness in every word that you speak and demeanor that you display. Jesus wants us to experience some LOL. The wonderful thing about that is we can.

That brings me to the third thing that I would like to encourage you in and that is the expression of laughter. We should try laughing more. I know that there are a lot of folks who honestly believe that people who are laughing and enjoying life are doing so because they are not bright enough to understand how bad things are. No, that is not the case at all. I had a pastor tell me one time that he just turned it on and turned it off when it came to laughing and being jovial and upbeat. Well, at least give it a try to brighten up things and to live on the joy side of the street. I did point out to him that while he may not be able to turn on a switch and start laughing and enjoying life with folks, he did seem to have the ability to turn on the rotten attitude pretty quickly. In fact, he could turn it on faster than the snap of your finger.

There have been too many studies affirming the fact that many of life's physiological systems are affected for good because of a bright outlook, positive laughter, and a healthy joy being maintained in a person's life. It not only does them good — it does everybody around them good. For your wellbeing, the wellbeing of your family, and everyone who has to work with you or live around you, let me just give you a small little piece of biblical advice.

In the terms of today's communication, LOL — Laugh Out Loud.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

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Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

AUGUST 18, 2011

What's discovered

MARGARET LACKEY STATE MISSIONS OFFERING

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:3



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MARGARET LACKEY

OFFERING FOR STATE MISSIONS

Discovering Ministry Opportunities

- Volunteer Missionary Assistance — \$625,000**
Margaret Lackey scholarships helped send over 1500 short-term missionary volunteers into 45 nations and 11 states last year.
- Garaywa Camp & Conference Center — \$400,000**
Over 8,000 guests per year find spiritual renewal at Camp Garaywa. Margaret Lackey helped fund mission learning experiences last year through which 112 summer campers made professions of faith, and 18 surrendered to missions.
- Central Hills — \$400,000**
Over 2,700 campers found their way to Kosciusko this past year for Christian camping experiences and training in hands-on mission action like chain saw use and food preparation. Two hundred twelve youngsters made decisions to trust Jesus, and four out of the 30 summer staff leaders made missionary commitments while serving at camp.
- New Church Starts — \$175,000**
Margaret Lackey funds training for church planters, helping launch 12 new congregations last year.
- Community Mission Projects — \$175,000**
Margaret Lackey helped fund almost 100 projects last year resulting in a gospel witness to more than 7,500 persons.
- Disaster Relief — \$60,000**
Margaret Lackey trains nearly 300 first-responders every year and links us to Baptist Global Response (BGR) so that we can partner with the Southern Baptist Convention's disaster response network and send volunteers as far away as Japan or Peru for earthquake relief.
- Criminal Justice Ministries — \$50,000**
Margaret Lackey trains and helps resource prison ministry volunteers who work in state correction facilities and local jails. Mississippi Baptists work in partnership with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to train inmate ministers at Parchman State Penitentiary.
- CWJC/CMJC — \$30,000**
Each of the 18 Christian Women's Job Corps®/Christian Men's Job Corps® sites in Mississippi helps men and women move from dependency to self-sufficiency by obtaining job and life skills. Last year 274 participants were involved in Bible study and paired with a Christian mentor as they made this journey.
- College & University Outreach — \$30,000**
Reaching more than 21,000 college students in Mississippi, BSU programs are assisted by Margaret Lackey in mobilizing more than 300 short-term student missionaries serving across Mississippi and around the world.
- Cross Cultural Evangelism — \$20,000**
Mississippi Baptists worship in seven different languages every Sunday. Thirty-seven percent of our population is African American. Choctaws and Hispanics live next door. Margaret Lackey gifts help provide leadership training and mission strategy development for every culture.
- Language/Deaf Ministry — \$20,000**
Sharing the Gospel with those learning to read English, or the hearing impaired is important to Mississippi Baptists. Margaret Lackey trained 230 communication specialists who ministered to more than 860 people last year, leading to 16 professions of faith.
- Port Ministry — \$15,000**
More than 7,000 international seamen from nearly 40 countries visit Mississippi each year. Margaret Lackey provides a Christian witness through Bible distribution and "Jesus" DVDs. Over 100 sailors made a profession of faith last year as a result of our ministries.

Offering goal: \$2,000,000

Literacy missions touches unreached

By William H. Perkins Jr., Editor

Anyone making a quick trip to the supermarket, garden store, or just about anywhere else in Mississippi these days will often find themselves surrounded by languages they don't understand and people who don't look or dress like them. As America each year becomes more of a melting pot of divergent nationalities and religions, Mississippi Baptists are doing their part to help bring those individuals and families a message many of them have never heard: Jesus is Lord over all.

Literacy missions is one of the ways Mississippi Baptists are reaching out to those individuals and families. The annual State Literacy Missions Conference is the place where Baptists involved in literacy missions gather for training and support.

Nearly 70 people attended the 2011 State Literacy Missions conference at Crossgates Church in Brandon on July 14-16. Training workshops included Basic Adult Reading and Writing (ARW), Basic English as a Second Language (ESL), and Basic Bible Story Telling (BST). In addition, information sessions were held on:

- The Gift of Listening, for practical advice on how to develop listening skills in order to make assessments on what needs must be met.

- "First... Pray!" for sharpening prayer practices for beginning and supporting a missions effort.

- The Religion Next Door, which covered how to open doors to people from other countries who follow religions and traditions that are not Christian.

- Citizenship and Immigration Issues, which updated participants on legislation and actions in those areas of interest to immigrant community.

- Poverty and its Effects, which covered how people living in poverty reason and make decisions, and how Christians can approach successfully approach them with the Gospel.

"For The Religion Next Door session, we had a panel that included a person from China

who discussed Buddhism, a person from India who discussed the Hindu religion, and a person from Iran who discussed Islam," said Paula Smith, missions consultant for language and literacy in the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union Department in Jackson and coordinator of the State Literacy Missions Conference.

"That session helped us more fully understand how people coming into our churches from other nationalities and religion backgrounds so different from our own experiences can be reached with the Gospel. It was really eye-opening and, I think, productive," she said.

Participants at the conference could be trained or certified in ARW, ESL, and BST. "People who were already trained and certified were updated on the latest information on those areas of emphasis," Smith said.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Kendale Moore, who recently retired from the position of literacy missions missionary for the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga. Moore has more than 30 years of experience in literacy missions and ministries, including language missions director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention in Louisville.

He is also an attorney and holds a music degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville.

Smith is grateful for the support provided by gifts from Mississippi Baptists to the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions. While participants paid a nominal fee for materials and lunch, the offering picked up the tab for all the other expenses involved in putting on the conference.

"There is no way we could fund the conference without the support of the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions. I am so grateful to Mississippi Baptists for the support they have provided through the offering for this important ministry," she said.

Future literacy events include an ESL workshop on Sept. 8-10 at Union Church, Picayune; ARW workshop on Sept. 28-29 at the Pinebelt Adult Literacy Council in Laurel; and ESL workshop on Oct. 6-8 at Lauderdale Association, Marion.

LITERACY KEYNOTER — Kendale Moore, retired literacy missions missionary for the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga., addresses participants at the 2011 State Literacy Missions Conference on July 16 at Crossgates Church in Brandon. Mississippi Baptist literacy missions efforts are aimed at sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ while teaching important skills to immigrants and newcomers to the U.S. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



BE CAREFUL UP THERE! — Students and adults construct a carport for a handicapped man on one of the projects during the World Changers event in McComb, June 20-25. (Photo by Tony Martin)

World Changers make over McComb

By Tony Martin, Associate Editor

While some students spend their summers working part-time jobs, taking classes, or simply playing video games, others invest their lives in missions. Such was the case for the group of students working in McComb through the ministry of World Changers.

World Changers seeks to provide Christian youth and adults with opportunities to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others through practical learning experiences that teach servanthood and personal commitment to missions. Groups are typically housed in local schools, churches, or college facilities.

In 1990, the then Memphis-based Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention sponsored its first work project in Briceville, Tenn., with 137 youth and adults. High school students painted, reroofed, and performed other light construction jobs on nine homes in the area.

World Changers conducted a project in McComb June 20-25. The project consisted of 269 participants, adults and youth, with 23 separate projects at 16 different sites across the community. The group did roofing, painting, drywall, vinyl siding, porches, and even built a carport/pavilion. Churches from Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Missouri made up the total team. The group was hosted by First Church, McComb.

Students working on the carport project were typical in their assessment of their opportunity. "I just feel like I'm called by Christ to serve," said Tonia Weaver, from First Church, The Colony, Tex. "This is the way I feel like God wants me to help others."

"It's great seeing the happiness on peo-

ple's faces after we've finished our projects," said Matt Brown, also from The Colony.

"They're all smiles," said Tonia.

"One other thing is how our group is able to bond with groups from other churches, and with my own youth group," said Ashleigh Samuels from Ridgecrest Church in St. Louis, Mo. "We all come here on our own, but then we get to see the difference we're making."

Speaking of the specific project his group was working on, Matt said, "The man that lives in this house is in a wheelchair, and he was getting soaked any time he tried to get from his van to the house. Now we're building this carport and connecting it to the house so he can get in and out without a problem."

"God has called us to serve," said Tonia. "Each year, God calls us to something new, and he teaches me something new. I get to meet new brothers and sisters in Christ, those who want to have the same passion as me. We want to change the world, but it also changes me. World Changers gives you a burning fire for God, connecting you and Christ. It changes your world, and how you see the world."

"If you think your life is bad, you should see some of the places we've served," said Matt.

World Changers was funded in part through the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions, in conjunction with the Pike Association in McComb.

For more information on the ministry of World Changers, visit www.lifeway.com/worldchangers/, or contact Don Gann in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Phone (800) 748-1651, ext. 338, or local in Jackson, (601) 292-3334. Email dgann@mbcb.org.



FamilyFEST volunteers impact Mid-Delta

By Tony Martin, Associate Editor

Mid-Delta FamilyFEST took place in Mid-Delta Association July 20 - 24. FamilyFEST is a family-oriented event designed to involve participants in hands-on missions.

According to Tammy Anderson, consultant in the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union Department, "FamilyFEST had two goals. First, we wanted to come alongside the churches in Mid-Delta Association and encourage them and work with them; and second, it was an opportunity for families to do missions together. It was an opportunity for parents to model their faith and nurture spiritual growth in their children."

"We have different events for different purposes," Anderson said, "but for FamilyFEST we do put an emphasis on and stress that families attend together. Families can look different — we might have a grandfather and a grandson, for instance, and sometimes we've had three generations serving together. Singles are very much encouraged to participate as well, and we've accommodated youth groups and senior adult groups, but our target audience is families."

Approximately 125 volunteers participated in FamilyFEST. Mission projects took place all over the Cleveland, Greenwood, and Indianola areas. "We were able to provide FamilyFEST for \$25 a person, or \$50 a family," said Anderson. "We were able to make it that affordable because Mid-Delta Association received a Mississippi River Ministry grant from the North American Mission Board, and also received an associational missions project grant from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board."

The Mississippi grant came from the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions.

"Projects included light construction and painting, children's ministry, community outreach, and ministry evangelism," said Anderson. "This was our fourth year to do a family missions project."

The experience of Linda Sterling, who served at Delta Missions Ministry in Indianola, is typical. Sterling is a member of Zion Hill Church, Liberty. "We're sorting clothes for the ministry today," said Sterling as she worked.

(The ministry has an extensive clothes closet.) "We're just trying to separate the good from the bad."

Betty Duck from Liberty Church, Liberty, said, "This is the second FamilyFEST I've participated in. I was at the one in Pascagoula. We just love doing missions, and this is a great way to do missions."

We're going to teach Backyard Bible Clubs tomorrow."

"There are needs right here in Mississippi," said Sterling. "I've done mission work in other places such as Peru, and this is a way I can serve here at home."

"We're also going to a retirement center tomorrow," said Duck. "We'll visit with the folks there and sing. We receive more blessings than we give."

"There are needs right here in Mississippi. I've done mission work in other places such as Peru, and this is a way I can serve here at home."

— Linda Sterling
member of Zion Hill Church, Liberty
served at Delta Missions Ministry in Indianola

for this comes from the Lord," said Sterling. "Our treasures are in heaven."

The Lawson family from French Camp served in Greenwood. The family visited police and fire stations in the city, praying for the workers and delivering cookies and encouragement. "I wanted to teach my children what mission work was about and how in our everyday lives we can be missionaries," said father Alex Lawson, pastor of Bethesda Church in French Camp.

"We're here as a family, and we brought one other family. We have a lot of children in our church, and we want to make this an annual event. We want to bring what we've done back into our own community."

"We're having a good time," said Daniel, Lawson's son. "I enjoyed making the cookies," he said with a smile.

"We want those who came on this trip to share their experiences of how they were blessed when we get home," Lawson said. "Tomorrow we'll do some prayer walking, some cleanup work at the associational office in Cleveland, and we'll hang out at a park and work with some of the local kids."

"We've had a really good time so far. I've done all sorts of mission trips in the past, but being able to do this as a family is special."



SPREADING GOOD WILL — A group from Bethesda Church, French Camp, is shown at a fire station in Greenwood. The group took cookies and Scripture posters to the firefighters serving the city. Alex Lawson (right) is pastor. (Special to The Baptist Record)

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Are We Any Better Yet?

By Jimmy Porter
Miss. Baptist Christian Action
Commission

"We live in a gambling culture in which the dramatic expansion and new forms of organized gambling—from private casinos to state lotteries, from sophisticated slot machines to Internet games—raise challenging moral issues," writes Robert Kruschwitz, Professor of Philosophy at Baylor University and editor of the Christian Reflection. As with our society, a great number of Mississippians is largely desensitized to the dangers of gambling. One casino owner said to me, "I know you Baptists call it gambling but we prefer to call it entertainment." Gambling is not just another form of entertainment.

The Southern Baptist Convention each year sets aside a specific date known as Anti-Gambling Sunday. This day is for Baptists to focus on the issues related to gambling. This year

the date is September 18th. Gambling is very pervasive in our culture, not only here in Mississippi but throughout the world. Some form of legalized gambling is available in 48 states plus the District of Columbia. Hawaii and Utah are the two exceptions.

In our state the gross revenue from casino gambling last year was \$1,106,511,997.84 and our tax revenue was \$274,537,729.20. That, my friends, calculates into \$126,314.16 per hour going into gambling coffers. Legislators and citizens see those numbers and think casino gambling is a cash cow. They never stop to think about or calculate the social cost of gambling.

Earl Grinols, Distinguished Professor of Economics at Baylor University, says in this quarter's



Porter

issue of the Christian Reflection, "The social costs of gambling are hidden only to the extent that they are often misunderstood or overlooked. Empirical studies (which estimate some, but not all, of the implied social costs of gambling) report that the impact on society of one additional pathological gambler is about \$9,393 per year." The

National Council on Problem Gambling estimates that 2 million (1%) of U.S. adults meet the criteria for pathological gambling in a given year. Do the numbers! Americans spend approximately 19 billion dollars a year taking care of problems created by gambling and pathological gamblers alone.

One can visit a casino or gambling site anywhere in the U. S. and find what seems to be a business filled with people having the time of their lives. That is exactly what the gambling establishment wants you to see. The dark side or down side of gambling is hidden to the casual observer and often covered up in glowing reports.

Two particular areas Dr. Grinols discusses in his studies relate to taxes and jobs. We all have heard how many taxes and jobs have been created since the inception of gambling in our state, but when our gaming commission reports the numbers each month, do they project/subtract the lost taxes from other businesses that have closed or experienced a decrease in sales due to casino competition such as restaurants, etc.?

The number of jobs tallied by each casino does not mean the creation of new or first time jobs. These are erroneous assumptions due to the fact they never take into consideration the number of lost jobs at other businesses that provide similar services such as hotel and food services.

Suzi Paynter of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas says, "It is not the simple personal impulse to wager that is so destructive; it is the multi-billion dollar business model and its complicit partner, the state, that have elegantly designed machines and marketing that will without conscience 'play you to extinction.'" (Christian Reflection.) The term given to this type of gambling is predatory gambling, defined as the prac-

tice of using gambling products and venues to prey on human weakness in pursuit of corporate profits and government revenue. She also suggests in the same article "by legalizing and promoting gambling, the government effectively turns millions of people who are small earners with the potential to be small savers into a new class of habitual bettors."

Scripture teaches us we are not to be motivated by greed, nor covet what others have, and certainly not to take from our fellow man his livelihood. Today's many forms of gambling are presenting numerous problems for our citizens. As Baptists we are called to help those who are trapped by the gambling establishments' tentacles and certainly should not support it or close our eyes to what it is doing to our neighbors.

Please consider focusing some way on gambling on September 18th and if the Christian Action Commission can be of help, please call us 601-292-3329. After twenty years of legalized gambling in our state, I ask, "How much better off are you and how much better off is our state?"

Porter can be contacted at 601-292-3332 or at jporter@christianaction.com.

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JONES COUNTY 2011 BIBLE CONFERENCE
AUGUST 21-23
Services will be held at
SALEM HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH
601-763-7571 5850 Hwy 84 West (Six Miles West of Laurel)

FEATURED SPEAKERS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 21 - Morning at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Cecil Seagle, Retired Missions Director, Florida Baptist Convention
Dr. John Sullivan, Exec. Director-Treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21 - Evening at 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Fred Luter, Franklin Ave. Baptist Church, New Orleans, LA
Dr. Ted Traylor, Olive Branch Baptist Church, Pensacola, FL

MON. & TUES., AUGUST 22 & 23 - at 12:00 p.m. - Dr. John Sullivan

6:30 p.m.
Dr. Herb Reavis, North Jacksonville Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL
6:30 p.m.
Dr. Junior Hill, Evangelist, Hartselle, Alabama

MUSIC: Each service will be led by a choir combining the talents of each participating church.
CHILDREN'S SERVICES: During each night session a Worship Service will be provided for all children K-5th Grade.
MIDDAY SERVICE: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. At Salem Heights Lunch Provided

Presidential search

The Board of Trustees at Blue Mountain College, a coeducational liberal arts Christian college affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention, announces the search for its next president and invites nominations and applications for the position. Dr. Bettye Rogers Coward, the seventh and first female president, will retire from Blue Mountain College on June 30, 2012, when she will have completed 11 years as president. Dr. Coward led the College in a functioning planning process, extensive refurbishing of campus facilities, increasing enrollment, growing the endowment significantly, establishing the college's first graduate program, and developing a campus-wide wireless internet and course management system while maintaining a debt free situation. These accomplishments position a new president to take this Christian institution of higher education to new heights of excellence. Blue Mountain College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate and masters degrees.

Desired Qualifications: The successful candidate will be a member of a Baptist church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, hold an earned doctorate and/or a successful tenure related to the nature of leading an institution of higher learning, and be an effective communicator. The college is seeking a president who has a passion for students and their development and a capacity for shaping and communicating an institutional vision in ways that are compelling to donors, the media, and the community and to other college constituents. He/she will be expected to be an effective manager of resources.

Challenges: The next president of Blue Mountain College will build upon the foundation developed by the current Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff and take the institution to new heights of excellence. The new president, through his/her leadership, will work with all of the college's constituent groups to expand the influence and educational opportunities of the college in the region and beyond.

To Apply: Go to www.bmc.edu and follow the application process as found on the Presidential Search section. The Presidential Search Committee is committed to the highest standards of professionalism in working with candidates, sources, and references, respecting the need for confidentiality. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

- DeKalb Church, DeKalb,** celebrated their 175th anniversary July 17. Shown is Steve Turner, former minister of music; pastor James Ruffin; and Hal Bates, former pastor and speaker.
- First Church, Kosciusko:** Revival, Aug. 21-24; Hal Kitchings, speaker; Mark Celeria, music; Barry Corbett, pastor.
- First Church, Lumberton:** 125th anniversary, July 31; over 300 attending, including Trinity Christian Fellowship, United Methodist, and Shepherd's Flock Churches included; shown is the reunion choir of over 50 singers.
- Bethel Church, Copiah County:** Homecoming, Aug. 28; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Mack Massey, speaker; Denise Windom, music; Tyson Windom, pastor.
- New Montpelier Church, Montpelier:** 85th anniversary celebration, Aug. 21; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and The Tracemen Quartet, 1:30 p.m.; Steve and Becky Carver, music.
- Enon Church, Grenada:** Revival, Aug. 28-31, 6 p.m.; Jon Haimes, speaker; Melissa Haimes Moore, music.
- Mt. Pisgah Church, Rankin Association:** Revival, Aug. 28-31; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Wayne Hudson, speaker; Jan Jones, music; Jason Holland, pastor.
- Bunker Hill Church, Columbia:** Revival, Aug. 21-24; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 a.m.; Gene Douglas, speaker; Dudley Williamson, music.
- Sand Hill Church, West:** Revival, Aug. 21-24; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Ed Newman, speaker; Mon., 7 p.m.; Jim Garner, speaker; children and youth night pizza, 6 p.m.; Tues., 7 p.m.; Jim Ray, speaker; family night fellowship meal, 6 p.m.; Wed., 7 p.m.; Steve Jordan, speaker; fellowship meal, 6 p.m.; Steve and Becky Carver, music; Ed Newman, pastor.
- Brandon Church, Brandon:** One day revival, Aug. 21; services, 8:15 and 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Junior Hill, speaker.
- Holly Grove Church, Simpson County:** Homecoming, 4th Sunday in August; singing, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish luncheon and annual cemetery meeting.
- Furrs Church, Pontotoc:** Bible conference and revival, Aug. 21-24; Sun., 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 9 a.m. - noon and 6:30-8:30 p.m.; lunch provided Mon.-Wed.; Sun. speakers, Steve Cohea and Tony Moore; Mon. speakers, Ronnie Barfield, Kevin Merritt, and Jimmy Russell; Tues. speakers, Don Smith, Ron Lovins, and Andy Russell; Wed. speakers, James Shutt, Steve Parrish, and Matt Russell; music, Andi Wilhite, Furrs Baptist Trio, Crawford Crossing, and Masters Quartet, Wheeler.
- Short Creek Church, Yazoo City:** Homecoming and revival, Aug. 21 and 23-24; Sun., services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; R. B. McNeers, speaker; Van Foster, music; Tues.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Pender and Frank Harmon, speakers; Will Edgars, music; Bill Hutto, pastor.
- Sunrise Church, Carthage:** Revival, Aug. 21-24; Jim Futral, Mickey Dalrymple, Stan Buckley, and Scott Vaughn, speakers; Ed Braiser, music; for more information, visit www.sunrisebc.net.

REVIVAL SERVICES

Brandon Baptist Church
100 Brandon Baptist Drive • Brandon, Ms 39042
Sunday, August 21, 2011
8:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Evangelist Junior Hill
Past Vice-President of Southern Baptist Convention
Nationally Acclaimed Author and Speaker
Delivering the Good News of the Gospel in over 1700 revivals
Website: juniorhillministries.com

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



1. Pilgrim's Rest

- Pilgrim's Rest Church, Attala County,** recently held their annual VBS. Shown are the participants.



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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Don't Criticize One Another

Romans 14:1-12, 19; James 4:11-12

By Beth Bowman

I am part of a team that helps plan events for the high school band. One of the joys of this team has been to spend time with other believers from different denominations and hear about their faith journey. Although spiritual encouragement is not the goal of this group, it's been wonderful to see how many truths about Christ and our spiritual lives that have been congruent with each other. Unfortunately for me, this has been one of the few times I have put myself in a position to dialogue with friends of other evangelical faiths. I've learned a lot and been encouraged. The focus of this lesson is to inspire us to encourage and support our friends in their walk with Christ, instead of judging them.

The Problem with Criticism

(James 4:11-12)

At the start of this chapter, James asks the question, "What causes quarrels and fights among you?" James was asking this question of the believers and the church. He began in this chapter to explain why there were conflicts and how to prevent these in the future. After giving several practical examples, James then commands them in the first part of verse 11, "Do not speak against one another, brethren." (NASB). Pretty clear, don't you think? The rest of the verse explains the reason why. Our job is to keep the law, not to judge others in whether or not they are keeping the law. By slandering someone, we place ourselves above the law and judge our actions by a standard different from God's. Psalm 15



Bowman

The Need for Acceptance

(Romans 14:1-4)

Paul begins with a strict warning to the believers to accept him who is weaker in the faith without passing judgment on disputable matters. There are several reasons why a believer might be weaker than another. The believer could be new in following Christ, the believer could have been exposed to wrongful teaching or not ever had in depth teaching, or they may be rebellious. Regardless of the reason, in matters that are not paramount to our faith, we are to accept each other. He went on to explain that a believer who has freedom to eat anything should not judge or look down on a person who eats vegetables. This is referring to

reminds us of the requirements for someone who dwells in God's presence. In verse 2-3 it states, "(someone) who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue," (NIV).

Christians who thought it was a sin to eat meat purchased in the marketplace. They believed this meat may have been previously sacrificed to idols, and therefore made it sinful to consume. One other explanation is the weaker believers may be continuing to follow strict Jewish dietary restrictions and the meat wasn't kosher. Regardless of their choice, Paul's message was clear in verse 4, "Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls." In the end, it will be God, our boss and master, who judges us. It should never be a fellow believer on non-important issues.

The Goal of Encouragement

(Romans 14:5-12, 19)

In this passage, Paul wants the believers to be sure in their convictions. Whatever we do, we should do in the desire to please God. A believer in your church may have a conviction against certain movies and another may have freedom in this area. As a follower of Christ, a believer may have a conviction about their politics and voting. It's important for

us to recognize what these non-essentials are that keep us from walking in unity and love.

Pat Cochran writes 30 encouraging notes a week. Jackie Polk is joyful and servant-hearted. John Ashley tells others what they can accomplish. A group of faithful men give up their Thursday a.m. to visit hospitals, Barney and Evelyn teach preschoolers. Marie and Mark make the coffee. Linda lends books. Russell shows others how to work a software program. These are just a few of the many, many people in my church who take the scripture to heart and feed to their convictions. They are part of the many shining examples of believers who know that encouragement, support and focus are the ways we should show support to our family of faith. Family, let's get busy with the ultimate priority of sharing Jesus and encouraging others in their faith and leave the judging to God.

Bowman is Minister of Connection at First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Recognize the Lord's Authority

Jeremiah 50:2-3a, 24-25, 29-32, 44b

By Harold Simmons

With this lesson we end our study of the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah has revealed to us the sovereignty of the Lord over all nations and people. In these lessons we see how the Lord has used the Babylonians to execute His judgment upon the people of Judah. Now God is about to bring His judgment upon Babylon.

None is invincible

(Jeremiah 50:2-3a)

Babylon was the ruling country for most of the Middle East at the time. They had the military might, financial power, and political influence to dominate the world. They had run roughshod over Judah and Jerusalem. They had left little untouched. They had destroyed by fire and death whatever got in their way.



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burning every building and destroying any provisions that would aid the advancing Germans. So too, Babylon will be.

The lesson is clear. No nation or people are so great that God's power cannot bring them to their knees. No nation or person can escape God's judgment.

Resistance is futile

(Jeremiah 50:24-25, 44b)

Jeremiah laid out the events that would happen in Babylon without giving the details of what was going to happen. He simply said what God had revealed to him about the end of the Babylonian empire. The trap that God had laid out was the Persian army under King Cyrus. Historical accounts give us more details of the battle. The Persians diverted the Euphrates River which ran under the walls of Babylon. This action allowed the Persians to go under the walls and into the city. As they poured into the city, the citizens

welcomed them instead of fighting the Persians.

There is a Biblical account of what the leading people of Babylon were doing at the time the Persians came. Daniel chapter 5 gives us a record of the events. King Belshazzar and a thousand of his nobles were having a banquet where much wine was consumed. Goblets from the temple of the Lord were brought in from which the people drank. The Babylonians then praised the gods of the metals, wood and stone, not the Lord who had created these items. These items are the crude materials from which the Babylonians had fashioned their idols. These actions were a double affront to the Lord—using the goblets dedicated to the Lord and assigning tribute to other gods the creative power of the Almighty.

Daniel gives us the account that on the same night, Belshazzar was killed and the kingdom became that of Darius the Mede.

God set the trap and Darius sprung the trap on Belshazzar.

God was and is in control so resistance to God is futile.

Resistance is Fatal

(Jeremiah 50:29-32)

In a play named "No Exit," the author sets a stage with no windows or doors. The actors come on stage and begin to fight each other. In the fight they kill each other and lay a while on the stage. Then, they get up and start to fight again and kill each other. There is no escape. This is what God is telling the Babylonians; there is no escape from the coming judgment. Just as they have brought destruction on others, so will they be destroyed. God is saying that He is against them and that none will escape.

When we sin against God, there is no escape unless we have the blood of Jesus sprinkled on our soul. Unless we humble ourselves and accept His forgiveness in Christ Jesus, we will not escape His judgment.

Simmons is currently interim pastor at Cascilla Church, Cascilla.

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1. Iglesia Hispana de Clinton, Clinton



2. Freeny Church, Carthage



3. Silver Creek Church, Pike Association



4. Hope Church, Cedar Bluff

1. Iglesia Hispana de Clinton, Clinton, celebrated its 5th anniversary July 8. Shown are pastor Cosme Arana, Eva Arana (center) along with Chris Goolsby, First Church, Hazlehurst, left; David Alexander, formerly of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Church Planting Department, center rear, and Mark Sandifer, Morrison Heights Church.

2. A group from Freeny Church, Carthage, attended the Lad/Dad retreat at Central Hills Baptist Retreat. Shown are the participants.

3. Silver Creek Church, Pike Association, recognized its graduates. Shown are Josh Troxler, Lloyd Thompson, and Jennifer Dewitt.

4. The fathers of Hope Church, Cedar Bluff, were presented with a pocket knife inscribed with "Men of Faith" after they pledged to continue to raise their families in Christian love and faith in God. Shown are the participants.

5. Trinity Church, Amory, ordained Michael Knight as deacon. Shown are Lloyd Minor, Knight, and pastor Jack Dauphin.

6. Thirty-seven youth and 13 adults from Slayden Church, Slayden, participated in Mission Arlington June 4-11, conducting backyard VBS and ministering to children in the area. Fifteen salvations were reported. Brian Ross, Minister of youth. Shown are the participants.

7. The congregation of First Church, Brandon, participated in a prayer journey for 38 different schools. The prayer journey team changed their church education space for people to come and pray for specific schools. Shown are Lauren, Cindy, and Allie Anderson and Penny Lively signing prayer posters for schools.

8. Siloam Church, Meadville, ordained Dane Hodges to the ministry June 21. He has been called as pastor to Hepzibah Church, Silver Creek. Shown are Jana Hodges, Hodges, Barry Dillard, and pastor Leon Wallace.



5. Trinity Church, Amory



6. Slayden Church, Slayden



7. First Church, Brandon



8. Hodges ordination

